

Dear ESH members, dear Colleagues and Friends!

As President and Secretary of the European Society of Hypertension (ESH) and on behalf of the Scientific Council of the ESH, we would like to send this message to you during this difficult time of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This very difficult and challenging time has not only raised profound questions about many aspects of our social life, but has also brought many challenges in the field of medicine that go beyond the limits of management and care of COVID-19 patients.

As health professionals, we are used to facing difficult situations, but the scale and impact of this ongoing pandemic is testing both our health systems and our determination. In Lombardy, Italy, alone, almost 10% of patients hospitalized with COVID-19 are healthcare professionals. Many of our colleagues, including experts in hypertension and cardiovascular medicine, are currently working at the forefront of medical care across Europe at great personal risk. We are deeply moved and saddened by the passing of our colleagues in several countries, including Italy, which has reported the deaths of almost 90 doctors at the time of writing this letter. Their selfless commitment and personal sacrifice deserve our deepest respect, and we express our condolences and sympathy to their families and staff.

As hypertension specialists, we must remember that SARS-CoV-2 affects not only the elderly population but also - for reasons that are not fully understood - a considerable number of younger and middle-aged patients. In addition, many patients suffering from other diseases are unable to access the treatment they need due to the congestion of health systems and the suspension of routine health care.

There is no doubt that the current period is painful for the individual and for the fabric of society as a whole. We are facing enormous changes in our daily lives, such as social distancing and isolation.

However, we can hope that this dramatic time will bring some good and that our European health care capacity will be able to withstand this enormous crisis.

It is also possible that this situation could promote greater international cooperation and the renewed development of a Europe "without borders". As doctors, we should use this time to cultivate the idea of integrated work, including the exchange of solutions and therapeutic modalities.

On behalf of the ESH, we encourage our colleagues to stand firm and continue their committed fight against COVID-19. Only then we will have the opportunity to get through this period with pride.

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Reinhold Kreutz



Andrzej Januszewicz